

Today's News - Monday, July 20, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you, dear readers, for your patience - and your many kind and thoughtful notes over the last while. We're slowly easing back into the real world (a truculent Internet connection today) - and glad to be back!

- It's a Stirling kind of day, with (mostly) high praise for the shortlist of six: Heathcote hails them as being "generous, self-effacing and thoughtful," and "possibly the most unshowy group of buildings in the prize's history."
- Merrick gives "three cheers for excellent ordinary architecture - most of them serve ordinary people, and ordinary daily life" (they're "bling-free").
- Moore marvels at "the virtues of quiet craft" of the shortlist "dominated by 'whispering' candidates - scrupulous designs of brick and timber."
- Wainwright finds "no flashy baubles by famous names, as the contenders for the best building of the year reflect the chastened times in which they were designed."
- Ijeh, on the other hand, says it is "one of the most irrelevant shortlists" in the Stirling's history - "awards are about stardust and not shelter and this year's crop is decidedly lacking in inspiration."
- Wainwright delves into the "troubled history" of Hadid's now-scrapped Tokyo Olympic stadium - it's about "much more than architectural infighting" ("It was a white elephant waiting to happen").
- Saffron, on a much cheerier note, finds some of Philly's "best new architecture is at the Navy Yard - better than most of what we're seeing in Center City or University City" (by big and not-so-big names).
- Russell x 2 re: things getting a bit easier in The Big Easy: he takes a deep dive into how New Orleans is learning "to live with water" 10 years after Katrina, though "many opportunities have been squandered."
- Beyond water management, he looks into why and how the city "works better and offers greater opportunity than it did before the storm - tiny enterprises have done much to knit New Orleans back together."
- Pogrebin reports on Adjaye's design for the Studio Museum in Harlem, which "signifies the museum's move from the margins to the mainstream."
- Giovannini has high hopes for Asymptote's Hermitage Museum outpost in Moscow, "signaling an ambition to become a New York-style art powerhouse."
- Unite to Save the Frick presents Helperr's "alternate expansion vision" that it "believes would give the Frick everything it wants without the public backlash" (and saves its Russell Page garden).
- Dunlap details the machinations behind the WTC transit hub's retractable skylight: "Calatrava said the roof would open. And evidently it will."
- Eyefuls of Leveté's MPavilion 2015 in Melbourne, "a high-tech, ultra-thin forest-like canopy that will 'sway' in the breeze" + The MPavilion's "thin, translucent petals will bring an ethereal, light-filled space to the centre of Melbourne."
- Eyefuls of the recently-opened 4th Design Biennial Boston with four site-specific installations on view along Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway.
- It only took two years, but Cooper Union finally finds a new architecture dean with Tehrani (his former Office dA partners have fared well in academia, too).
- Hawthorne pens an eloquent tribute to Donald Wexler: "There was an optimism inherent in nearly all of his work."

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Stirling shortlist speaks to UK's architectural maturity: Prize contenders are generous, self-effacing and thoughtful: ...possibly the most unshowy group of buildings in the prize's history. That is, perhaps, a sign of a growing maturity and confidence in British architecture. By Edwin Heathcote -- Reiach & Hall; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Heneghan Peng; Muma; AHMM/Alford Hall Monaghan Morris; Niall McLaughlin [images]- Financial Times (UK)

Riba Stirling Prize 2015 shortlist revealed: Entries for British architecture's 'Oscar' are bling-free: There is no reason why ordinary buildings can't be well designed: Three cheers for excellent ordinary architecture...There is a faint odour of political correctness about the selected projects, but the key thing is that most of them serve ordinary people, and ordinary daily life. By Jay Merrick -- Alford Hall Monaghan Morris; Niall McLaughlin; Reiach and Hall; Rogers Stirk Harbour; Heneghan Peng; MUMA-Independent (UK)

The Stirling prize 2015: the virtues of quiet craft: The shortlist...is dominated by 'whispering' candidates -- scrupulous designs of brick and timber...it would take special courage to favour a design that apparently does so little, but does what it does do well. By Rowan Moore -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Niall McLaughlin Architects; Reiach and Hall; MUMA; AHMM; Heneghan Peng - Observer (UK)

Stirling prize 2015 shortlist highlights UK's desperate housing crisis: There are no flashy baubles by famous names, as the contenders for the best building of the year reflect the chastened times in which they were designed. By Oliver Wainwright -- Alford Hall Monaghan Morris; Niall McLaughlin Architects; Reiach and Hall Architects; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Heneghan Peng architects; MUMA- Guardian (UK)

Ike Ijeh damns the Stirling Prize shortlist: ...compares badly alongside a building like James Stirling's No1 Poultry: ...has produced one of the most irrelevant shortlists in its history...But awards are about stardust and not shelter and this year's crop is decidedly lacking in inspiration. -- Reiach and Hall; Heneghan Peng; MUMA; AHMM; Niall McLaughlin; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners - BD/Building Design (UK)

The troubled history of Zaha Hadid's Tokyo 2020 Olympic stadium project: PM Shinzo Abe's decision to cancel the building was, for many in Japan, long overdue and about much more than architectural infighting...has faced fierce criticism from all quarters, suggesting it was doomed from the start. Japan's most eminent architects came out all guns blazing..."It was a white elephant waiting to happen"... By Oliver Wainwright -- Fumihiko Maki; Toyo Ito; Kengo Kuma; Sou Fujimoto; Arata Isozaki; Jeff Kingston - Guardian (UK)

Some of city's best new architecture is at the Navy Yard: Not only has [it] moved beyond the bland office-park model...it also is producing some of the best architecture in Philadelphia - better than most of what we're seeing in Center City or University City...there is almost no developer-built architecture in greater Center City that comes close to it in imagination or materiality. By Inga Saffron -- BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group; James Corner Field Operations; Digsau; Erdy McHenry [images]- Philadelphia Inquirer

New Orleans Goes with the Flow: Ten years after Katrina, the city learns to live with water: ...there's a broad consensus that the city works better and offers greater opportunity than it did before the storm...Yet many opportunities have been squandered...a nascent green economy is growing around natural-systems solutions for landscape restoration and wetlands engineering. By James S. Russell -- NBBJ; Ray Manning Architects; Waggonner & Ball Architects; Blich Knevel Architects; Eskew+Dumez+Ripple [images]- Architectural Record

Fortified Island: New Orleans Changes, Yet Remains True to Itself: ...has good news to share after a decade...even as the future presents yet more daunting challenges...a study in unexpected contrasts...there's a broad consensus that [it] works better and offers greater opportunity than it did before the storm...tiny enterprises have done much to knit New Orleans back together. By James S. Russell -- Eskew+Dumez+Ripple; Manning Architects [images]- JamesSRussell.net

Studio Museum in Harlem Unveils Design for Expansion: ...a new \$122 million home...at the site of its current location on West 125th Street...The project also signifies the museum's move from the margins to the mainstream...inspired by the

surrounding Harlem vernacular... By Robin Pogrebin -- David Adjaye/Adjaye Associates; Cooper, Robertson & Partners [image]- New York Times

Hermitage Museum to Open a Contemporary Outpost in Moscow: ...signaling an ambition to become a New York-style art powerhouse...140,000-square-foot, 15-story satellite, with a shrink-wrapped digital skin...will be part of a mixed-use district developed on the grounds of the former ZIL auto plant... By Joseph Giovannini -- Hani Rashid/Lise Anne Couture/Asymptote Architecture [image]- New York Times

Exclusive: Turning a Page: Unite to Save the Frick presents an alternate expansion vision for the storied institution: ...it wasn't just the high-profile coalition and onslaught of bad press that sank this plan...has not yet unveiled a second draft of its expansion plan - or announced an architect...USF has come up with a planning study of its own that it believes would give the Frick everything it wants without the public backlash. -- Davis Brody Bond; Helpert Architects [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Retractable Skylight in World Trade Center Oculus Takes Final Form: Santiago Calatrava said the roof would open. And evidently it will...by far the most conspicuous element in the [transit hub], which is nearing completion after 10 years..."It's like a living creature. It's evolving, it's morphing..." By David W. Dunlap -- Heintges & Associates [images]- New York Times

British architect Amanda Levete pushes boundaries with design for new MPavilion: ...challenges the notions of "structure"...a high-tech, ultra-thin forest-like canopy that will "sway" in the breeze, responding to the climate and landscape changes. -- AL_A; mouldCAM [images]- The Age (Australia)

A dreamy light under a canopy of petals for MPavilion '15: A series of thin, translucent petals open to the elements will bring an ethereal, light-filled space to the centre of Melbourne as part of this year's MPavilion in Queen Victoria Gardens. -- Amanda Levete/AL_A; Arup; mouldCAM- The Australian

Fourth Design Biennial Boston Opens: Site-specific installations from Cristina Parreño Architecture, GLD, Landing Studio, and MASS Design Group on view along Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway through Sept. 25. An introductory display runs concurrently at BSA Space, a home for the Boston Society of Architects and the BSA Foundation designed by Höweler + Yoon Architecture. -- pinkcomma gallery [images]- Architect Magazine

Nader Tehrani Named New Architecture Dean at Cooper Union: ...ends a drawn-out search for a dean after Anthony Vidler resigned two years ago...founded...Office dA with Rodolphe el-Khoury; Monica Ponce de Leon joined the firm in 1991...All three members have recently received deanships...El-Khoury at the University of Miami School of Architecture last year, and Ponce de Leon at Princeton's architecture school in May. -- NADAAA- Architectural Record

An Appreciation: Architect Donald Wexler made Palm Springs modern: ...when he arrived in the desert in the fall of 1952...[he] realized that Palm Springs was busy planning a range of public institutions - and that those institutions needed architects...leaves behind a body of work that suggests the evolution, the many chapters, of postwar modernism in California...There was an optimism inherent in nearly all of his work. By Christopher Hawthorne -- William F. Cody; Richard Harrison; John Lautner; E. Stewart Williams; Albert Frey; John Porter Clark; Robson Chambers - Los Angeles Times

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